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Kris Perry Executive Director of First 5 California Issues Statement in Response to Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development

A study published in the March-April issue of the journal *Child Development* evaluates the impact of child care on a child's behavioral development and future academic performance. First 5 California welcomes this study and others like it so parents have access to the most comprehensive information available to help make important decisions about which child care option best suits their family's needs and will help their child thrive.

Above all, this study concludes that parents have a far more powerful impact on children than any of the effects of day care. This finding reiterates First 5 California's long-held position that the most important teacher for any child is his or her parent and the early learning opportunities that a parent provides at home will last a child's lifetime.

Yet the reality is most working families will have to turn to child care at some point. Research shows that more than half of California's children under age 5 require the care of someone other than their parents. It is critical that we provide parents with the next best alternative to their care by giving their children access to quality child care and preschool programs.

That's why First 5 California and its 58 County Commissions are investing more than \$150 million in its Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program, which provides thousands of teachers and early education providers continuing educational opportunities. Our CARES program is strengthening the quality of child care that children receive by deepening the knowledge and skills of the people who teach them.

Additionally, First 5 California is investing nearly one billion dollars to create high-quality early learning opportunities for all of California's youngest children. As part of this effort, First 5 California launched a voluntary Power of Preschool program that offers free access to preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds in nine counties across California.

To find out more about how First 5 California is helping ensure all of California's children grow up health and learning, please visit our Web site at: www.cafc.ca.gov